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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/17/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [IS](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: ISRAELIS APPRECIATE PRESIDENT'S POLICY ADDRESS ON  
IRAQ

REF: STATE 3592

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones, Reason 1.4 (b) (d)

¶1. (C) Pol Couns drew on reftel background to brief MFA Deputy Director General for the Middle East (A/S equivalent) Yacov Hadas-Handelsman January 16. Hadas-Handelsman said Israel shared the U.S. interest in a unified, stable Iraq, adding that this was what the Arabs wanted as well. Hadas-Handelsman commented that he thought President Bush's approach was the right one, but Arab support, particularly from the GCC Plus Two states, would be critical. He expressed particular appreciation that the President's January 10 announcement did not mention "linkage" between stabilizing Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

¶2. (C) Hadas-Handelsman said the need now was to bring the key Arab states on board, not just with regard to Iraq, but also regarding Lebanon, Iran, and the Palestinians. He advised that the U.S. be sensitive to increasing Jordanian, Egyptian and Saudi suspicion of the Iraqi Government. A former Israeli Ambassador to Jordan, Hadas-Handelsman cautioned that the Jordanians in particular felt they would be left dangerously exposed if the U.S. withdrew from Iraq prematurely. Pol Couns assured Hadas-Handelsman that the President was committed to stabilizing Iraq. In that regard, Israel's continued discreet support was important to the U.S.

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